ABSTRACT

Fine-tuning Medium of Instruction (FTMOI) policy was introduced in 2010 after more than ten years of compulsory Chinese as the instructional medium for junior secondary education. Research results have proved that learning through first language Chinese does not necessarily guarantee better academic performance. Instead, the rigid compulsory Chinese medium of instruction policy led to a general decline in English standards. This alarms most students and parents in several regards. First, the lack of opportunities to the exposure of English affects the build-up of the English abilities for most students. Second, the declining English standards can potentially affect the chance of students being admitted into university as English is a prerequisite for further education in Hong Kong or other places of the world. Declining English standards also weakens the competitiveness of Hong Kong as a world financial center. Hong Kong has a strong bilingual tradition where most people can benefit from the trade and businesses. With strong demand for English in all sectors, the Education Bureau finally proposed a more flexible medium of instruction policy aiming to cater for the language needs of the students as well as their bilingual development.

This study aims to investigate the views and attitudes of principals, teachers and students towards the Fine-tuning Medium of Instruction policy. Special focuses were given to investigate the strategies employed by teachers and students as well as the measures taken by the schools for FTMOI implementation. Two government-aided schools were selected to participate in this study. Based on the student intake of the year, the two schools were approved by the Education Bureau to arrange English-medium classes. The change of medium of instruction from Chinese medium (CMI) to English medium (EMI) is under a six-year review cycle. In this study, a Convergent Mixed Methods Design has been adopted to explore the issue regarding teaching and learning under FTMOI. The quantitative part of the research includes the study of the surveys in reflecting the views and attitudes of all stakeholders (Principals, teachers and students) towards FTMOI. Comparison has been made between the EMI and partial-EMI students within schools. Special attention is given
to the strategies employed by teachers and students through interviews and lesson observation, the qualitative part of the study. Significance of the study is reported.

Results indicated that most stakeholders (principals, teachers and students) welcomed the Fine-tuning Medium of Instruction policy (FTMOI) despite diverse views observed when conducting interviews. Groups of strategies used by teachers were explored, categorized and analyzed how they played the role to help bridge both knowledge and language gaps of students when teaching was conducted through a second language. A detailed record of the strategies used by teachers and students helped uncover the complication of teaching content-based subject through English. The results of this study should provide more insights for further investigation concerning English-medium teaching.

Investigating the FTMOI implementation, not only does this study fill the knowledge gap of exploring the pedagogical insights regarding learning through a second language, but it also helps to inform policy-makers the perspectives of teaching and learning in bilingual context while providing solutions to the strategy use of teaching content-based subjects through English in achieving better learning outcomes, both in terms of content knowledge and English. Further exploration of enhancing teaching and learning through a second language is worth to be discussed in this research paper.
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